

LEGAL NOTICE
Scoping Period
Granite Meadows Project
McCall and New Meadows Ranger District
Payette National Forest
Adams, Idaho, and Valley Counties

The Payette National Forest is soliciting scoping comments for the Granite Meadows Project on the McCall and New Meadows Ranger District in Adams, Idaho and Valley County, Idaho. The scoping documents are available electronically on the project webpage: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54029>. The Granite Meadows Project is a landscape-scale effort to improve conditions across multiple resource areas. The project is located north of New Meadows, Idaho and north and west of McCall, Idaho on the Boise Meridian, within Adams, Valley and Idaho Counties. The analysis will evaluate and disclose the effects of implementing treatments on the National Forest to meet the purpose and need for the project. Proposed treatments include timber harvest, thinning, prescribed fire, road treatments and road decommissioning, watershed improvement and restoration treatments, and recreation improvements. The Granite Meadows Project area totals approximately 83,000 acres, and includes approximately 70,000 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands within the New Meadows and McCall Ranger Districts on the Payette National Forest. Additionally, the project area includes approximately 7,000 acres of state land and 6,000 acres of private land, where proposed treatments would be covered under the Wyden Authority (Wyden Amendment, Section 323(A) of the Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 as included in P.L. 105-277, Div. A, Section 101 (e) as amended by Public Law 111-11, Section 3001). Actions proposed for use under the Wyden Authority would meet the intent and requirements of state and federal laws for actions on private and/or state lands. The project is located in the Hard Creek, Hartsell Creek-North Fork Payette River, Elk Creek-Little Salmon River, Lower Meadows Valley-Little Salmon River, Round Valley Creek-Little Salmon River, Sixmile Creek-Little Salmon River, Box Creek-North Fork Payette River, Fisher Creek, and Payette Lake subwatersheds with the Little Salmon and North Fork of the Payette subbasins.

The proposal includes vegetative treatments (commercial, non-commercial, prescribed burning, and associated actions); watershed improvement and restoration treatments; and recreation improvements. Additionally, coordination with existing permittees on grazing programs would occur within the project area to meet the purpose and need of reducing the risk of uncharacteristic and undesirable wildland fire. Other activities associated with implementing the above vegetative treatments include commercial harvest-related road maintenance and use; cone collection; temporary roads; fireline construction; rock pits; slash treatment; site preparation; and planting.

Through agreements between the US Forest Service, willing private landowners, county governments, and Idaho Department of Lands (*i.e.*, those identified within the project area boundary), treatments would seek to meet the purpose and need for the project and could include non-commercial thinning, prescribed fire, brush disposal, planting and seeding of native vegetation, watershed improvements (*e.g.*, culvert replacements and stream stabilization), and road repair. Actions proposed as part of this project would comply with all laws applicable to management of State and Private land. Agreements under the Wyden Authority would not restrict or preclude these land owners from managing or implementing other additional activities on their lands.

The proposal also includes NFS road treatments, unauthorized route treatments, streambank and wetland restoration activities, and fish passage improvements. Road management actions for this project would utilize the McCall and New Meadows Ranger District Travel Analysis recommendations (completed in 2014 and 2015, respectively). Unauthorized routes not needed for future management would also be evaluated for some level of restoration treatment as required by Forest Service Manual 7734.01. and 7734.02. Site-specific streambank and wetland restoration actions would occur in Sater Meadows, Mud Creek, or other areas across the project area where stream channels, wetlands, or riparian areas are in a degraded condition. Actions to improve stream channels, riparian habitat, and wetlands may include: streambank stabilization, minor channel re-alignment, fence reconstruction, and planting native vegetation. These actions may also include placement of instream or streambank structures such as, but not limited to, rock, large woody debris, beaver dam analogs (BDAs), and barriers to prevent unauthorized motorized travel in sensitive areas. Road-crossing improvements have been identified in the project area to improve fish passage and hydrologic connectivity, including crossings in the Round Valley Creek Little Salmon River subwatershed, the Sixmile Creek Little Salmon River subwatershed, and in the Upper Goose Creek subwatershed.

The recreation proposal would include: A) improving the existing trail system by establishing user-created (unauthorized) trails as system trails where appropriate, converting some roads to trails, and removing user-created trails that negatively impact watershed and soil health;; B) replacing or repairing existing facilities, including restrooms and lake amenities; C) addressing dispersed recreation issues by enhancing sites, hardening sites, closing some sites, and/or sign installation; D) managing roads (including relocation), posting signage and/or considering closure orders (temporary and/or permanent) to address public safety in areas where conflicting use occurs; E) improving skier experience and safety through vegetative treatments within the Brundage Mountain Resort's ski area.

Payette National Forest Supervisor Keith Lannom will be the Responsible Official for this project.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this project will be accepted. Send written comments to Keith Lannom, Forest Supervisor, 500 N. Mission Street, Building 2, McCall Idaho 83638. Comments may also be sent via facsimile to 208-645-0744. Comments must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic comments. The office hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments may also be provided at the New Meadows Ranger District Office during normal business hours via telephone 208-347-0300 or in person.

Comments may also be submitted through the Granite Meadows Project web page at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54029>. To submit comments using the web form select "Comment on Project" under "Get Connected" on the right panel of the project's web page. To be most helpful please submit your comments within 45 days of the publication of the Notice of Intent to publish an Environmental Impact Statement in the Federal Register. Publication of the Notice of Intent is expected to occur on October 31, 2018. A copy of the Notice of Intent will be available on the project web page. Your comments will help us refine the proposal and identify preliminary issues, interested and affected persons, and possible alternatives. Comments received in response to this request will be available for public inspection on the "Public Comment/Objection Reading Room" on the project web site: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54029> . This project is being planned under authorization

of the Pre-decisional Administrative Review Process defined by 36 CFR 218. Individuals and entities who submit specific written comments during the scoping period will be eligible to object. A second comment opportunity will also be provided during the notice and comment period for review of the draft Environmental Impact Statement and those who provide specific written comments during this comment period will also be eligible to object.

For further information on the Granite Meadows Project, please contact Erin Phelps, New Meadows District Ranger, by email ephelps@fs.fed.us or by telephone at 208-347-0300.

To aid understanding and review of the proposed action, the public is invited to a public meeting on Tuesday November 27, 2018, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the Forest Supervisors office (500 N. Mission Street, McCall, Idaho 83638). More meetings may be scheduled as well. Staff will be available to discuss the project and answer your questions. Specific written comments on this project will be accepted at this meeting.